

ing the character of Robert Harley says in a note, 'The character of Harley is to be collected from innumerable panegyrics and lampoons, from the works and the private correspondence of Swift, Pope, . . . / ¹ The danger is that charges made in these untrustworthy lampoons may be allowed too large a share in forming the historian's general estimate of the personage, may so influence his conception of the character that he may be tempted to accept trifles as confirmation of these charges, and not pay sufficient attention to evidence telling the other way. He may be prejudiced thereby from the outset, and approach the testimony of other witnesses with a biassed mind. Macaulay's estimate of Marlborough's character seems to illustrate this point. In the formation of that estimate Macaulay was far too greatly influenced by contemporary lampoons and satires. In the elaborate character of Marlborough and his wife given in chapter xv, we read : 'In one point the Earl and the Countess were perfectly agreed. They were equally bent on getting money; though when it was got he loved to hoard it, and she was not unwilling to spend it/ The note below mentions only one authority. 'In a contemporary lampoon are these lines :

" Oh, happy couple! In their life
There does appear no sign of strife ;
They do agree so in the main,
To sacrifice their souls for gain.

The Female Nine¹V*

A couple of pages later comes another reference to Lady Marlborough (in connection with the quarrel between Queen Mary and the Princess Anne), and we are told that 'if the scandalous chronicle of those times could be

¹ V, 2409, n. (xx).

² IV, 1817, n. (xv).